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FM AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6997
INFO RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEHZA/WHA CENTRAL AMERICAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHME/AMEMBASSY MEXICO 5093
RUEHLA/AMCONSUL BARCELONA 0021

UNCLAS GUATEMALA 000169

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

DOL FOR PCHURCH
DEPT FOR WHA/CEN, WHA/EPSC, EEB/BTA, AND DRL/IL
DEPT PLEASE PASS TO USTR CARLOS ROMERO

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [ELAB](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [GT](#)
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR RAISES CAFTA-DR LABOR SUBMISSION REPORT
WITH PRESIDENT COLOM

REF: GUATEMALA 145

¶1. (SBU) On February 19, the Ambassador raised U.S. concerns regarding enforcement of labor laws with President Colom and Foreign Minister Rodas. The Ambassador stressed the importance of responding quickly to the concerns raised in the CAFTA-DR labor submission and the recommendations in the submission report. He noted that he had also raised the issue with Finance Minister Fuentes (February 17) and Attorney General Velasquez (February 18). The Ambassador underscored the need to not only redress past grievances but also to more effectively enforce labor laws to deter violations of labor rights and to prevent recurrence of the practices raised in the CAFTA-DR complaint.

¶2. (SBU) The President acknowledged the importance of labor rights, and said he would ensure that the Ministries of Labor, Foreign Relations, and Economy take needed actions. Foreign Minister Rodas indicated that Vice Foreign Minister Pira had already reported our concerns to him, and that he would hold a meeting to discuss the matter in the Foreign Ministry later that day.

¶3. (SBU) In his February 17 meeting with Finance Minister Fuentes, the Ambassador pointed out that while the labor issue does not directly impact the Ministry of Finance, it has wider economic implications and that the U.S. regards it as a serious matter. Econoff provided Fuentes background on the complaint and recommendations on next steps. Fuentes did not have any immediate comment but expressed his clear interest in collaborating with other ministries to address the issue.
McFarland